



## TEACHER AND STUDENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT: folletian approach to school leadership

<sup>1</sup>Zionel Santana.

<sup>1</sup> Vale do Rio Verde University Center - Unincor/Brazil

<sup>1</sup> Master's Program in Management, Planning and Teaching, Três Corações, Brazil

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this article is a reflection on the relationship between teacher and student in the classroom. Usually, this approach is always presented to us from the traditional theories of Scientific Management. And such an approach always presents the teacher as the leader of his students, and his students led by the teacher. It reproduces that view of the hierarchical power relationship and the use of coercion and argumentation to convince students to carry out the objectives and goals. Emerging in this teacher-student relationship the figure of the hero leader or the hero teacher. This article brings some reflections by Follet based on the text that she herself wrote in October 1928 on the teacher-student relationship based on theories of human relations in an approach to the idea of management developed by her.*

**Index Terms - Teacher, Student, Leadership, Classroom Management, Follet.**

### I. INTRODUCTION

This text arose from a question my students asked during an explanation of the idea of leadership in Follet. When addressing the topic, they asked me to approach Follet's idea of leadership in education. In a way, Follet is not a specialist in education, she does not have a theory resulting from applied research at school. But Follet herself had already passed this same challenge by writing a text about the relationship between teacher and student. In a speech given at Boston University in the late fall of 1928, which was only published in the journal *Administrative Science Quarterly* Vol. 15 in 1970 after his death.

In this text, the author at first resists writing something that addresses the relationship between teacher and student. The reasons for the resistance were that she was not a specialist in education. However, what motivated me to address the topic was based on the reflection that teachers and students could very well be enchanted by the theory of human relations. For her, this is what a teacher does with her students in a classroom, they "influence" them so that they can achieve their learning purposes in the context of their needs. Therefore, each teacher is always a teacher of his time.

This article does not intend to exhaust the discussion already pointed out by Follet but recovers this reflection on the relationship between teacher and student in the light of Follet's thought. The reader in the article will briefly find definitions about leadership in the teacher-student relationship: what is the teacher-student relationship from the perspective of the idea of management. model in the way of interpreting the faber phenomenon. Engineering believed that it would be possible to assemble the puzzle of production

Finally, the article serves much more to an ordeal to the reader about the invisible leadership that the teacher exercises over the student, opposing the idea of leadership derived from the theories of scientific management, which developed the idea of the follower leader and the hero leader.

### II. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The idea of gestational leadership has its roots in Follett (1924) and this is present in his study of managerial anomalies. And one of these anomalies appears when she starts from the hypothesis that the constitution of power in traditional leadership was constituted in the observation of men in the results of the process in factory production. The idea of power was constituted in the characteristics of heteronormativity. When we refer to theories of leadership in administration, we are based on this idea of the power relationship arising from heteronormative experiences in the factory. Hence, Follet's statement (year) that the power constituted in the leadership of traditional administration theories, constitutes a theory of leadership only in the observation of the behavior of men in the relationship of followers and leaders in a factory environment.

In Follet (year) we find a theory of gestational leadership that is opposed to this conception of leadership from theories of scientific management based on heteronormativity. For Follet (1970) hand we can more from the twentieth century take into account the conception of a centralizing and hierarchical power. The idea of management, in its essence, breaks with this old paradigm of traditional management theories. Consequently, it understands that leaders and subordinates are in cooperation and no longer in a subordination relationship. Thus, gestational leadership expands the field of observation, from man to woman, or rather, leadership is not associated with a gender issue. More than that, gestational leadership expands power and subordination relations to the idea of cooperation and sharing the purposes of an economic organization. From that moment on, Follet (1970) introduces the idea of integrative force.

### 2.1. The invisible leader

The purpose of this text is to bring to light current reflections on a new approach to leadership outside the old paradigm of traditional scientific management theories. Well, talking about the relationship between the teacher and the student will reproduce the old traditional approaches, which have as a backdrop the idea of centralizing and hierarchical power.

“Any consideration of this subject must be influenced by our definition of leadership, and there is a conception of leadership gaining ground today very different from our former notion.” (Follet, 1970, p. 137). The concept of leadership in Follet is different from the traditional idea of scientific management theories. For her, gestational leadership breaks with 5 basic elements of administrative leadership: a) objectives and goals and expansion for the purpose; b) the paradigmatic foundation, from the mechanistic paradigm to the “integrating force, circular force” paradigm; c) the traditional understanding of the company as an end in itself, due to its dimension of social action; d) the decentralization of the figure of the leader as a hero for co-participation and co-responsibility of the followers, “coactive power” and, e) centralizing power based on instrumental reason for a power based on cooperative reason. (Santana, 2019). Thus, Follet's idea of leadership (1970, p. 137) “It is a conception very distant from that of the leader-follower relationship.” The folletian proposal (1970) of leadership is associated with the conception of a reciprocal and co-participatory leadership. Follet's strong argument is to oppose the idea of the follower leader figure to the idea of the invisible leader.

The constitution of the idea of the follower leader is also associated with the idea of the hero leader or the savior leader, who assumes the protagonist of the actions and achievements under his command. The follower leader generates subordinates and passive subjects in the subordinates. One of the strategies created from this conception is based on an idea of planning guided by objectives and goals in search of the recognition of success to a single person. So the idea of the invisible leader in Follet stands against all of that. For her, the invisible leader is based on a structured planning based on the purpose and the sharing of responsibilities and the appreciation of everyone's commitment to achieving the organization's telos. (Follet, 1970).

There is a contrary positioning of Follet to the figure of the hero leader. Thus, in the folletian model of leadership, functions alternate according to the needs of achieving the organization's purpose. There is no role in the organization that has lesser degrees of importance to the achievement of the purpose. Thus, there is reverence among all for the person who at that moment plays a role in realizing the purpose of the organization. This is the challenge of this text, to bring these unusual reflections to “the teacher-student relationship”. The idea of leadership has its roots in theories of scientific management. In a way, it is strange for educators to think that they are leaders of their students. This is not the conception that permeates the classical theories of education. The professor is well aware that education since the Greeks has the purpose of educating for autonomy and free and critical thinking. The idea of leadership in the student-teacher relationship has its origins outside of education, as passivity is not what teachers expect from their students. This idea comes from theories of scientific management.

### 2.2. Leadership and autonomy

The teacher-student relationship cannot be one of passivity. “The relationship of the rest of the group to the leader is not a passive one, and I think teachers see this more clearly than most people [...] (Follet, 1970, p. 137). For the teacher in his relationship with the student presupposes at its base the construction of autonomy. Autonomy presupposes that thought is constructed without coercion, without control in the sense of punishment. Therefore, autonomy depends on a teacher-student relationship in understanding, co-participation of co-responsibility, aware of the end of an action. Therefore, the idea of leadership is associated with the idea of autonomy. That is, a construction of free thinking. Therefore, for Follet (1970, p. 137) “the greatest service that the teacher can provide to the student is to increase his freedom - his freedom of action and thought and his power of control”. The teacher-student relationship takes at its center the emancipatory construction conducted by the teacher to a certain point, where the student will be able to freely build his process without the coercive guidance of the teacher. “No man and no mind were ever emancipated just by being left alone” (Dewey, 1927, p. 168 apud Follet, 1970, p. 137). This is the difference between the leadership of scientific management theories and Follet's gestational leadership. It presupposes that the student is co-responsible for building his/her autonomy. This Folletian idea is not the abandonment of the student to his own luck, the teacher continues in the relationship influencing the student, but invisible. Their presence is discreet so that the student develops. Therefore, a leadership that leads to freedom. Free is the one who can choose what his decision will be in the face of ordinary situations in life. And that your decisions always presuppose methods, the use of instruments. And this, that the teacher in a learning environment provides to the student. There is no autonomy in education that does not work on methods and the practice of using instruments. The idea of method goes back to the conception of the episteme itself, “the method has the ability to take us out of common sense, free us from our tutors and lead us to the ability to use reason itself” (Santana, 2019). The instruments, on the other hand, have the capacity to expand our reason in the observation of reality/phenomenon (Santana, 2019).

“It is these methods and instruments of control that must be taught to students - all in the spirit of freedom, all with the aim of increasing freedom. The teacher releases energy, releases potentialities, but within the method, within the laws of activity and control of the group”. (Follet, 1970, p. 138).

Gestational leadership in Follet's understanding (1997, p. 179) “[...] is the ability to organize all the forces that exist in a company, leading them to serve a purpose”. But that's what teachers do, they leverage each student's strength and direct the purpose of life. For Follet (1997) the purpose goes beyond the objectives and goals. The purpose is an existential condition that only ends with the end of the individual's existence. The purpose goes beyond the walls of the school. The idea of purpose is in opposition to the idea of goals and objectives. The objectives and goals of a company are usually constituted by the owner of the company or its shareholders. Thus, the objectives and goals depend on a coercive force to be accepted by those led. Objectives and goals are dependent on the power of the one who creates them. “[...] power is a question of industry, politics, international relations. But our task is not to learn where to put the power; it is like stopping developing power.” (FOLLETT, 1924, p. 12). Managerial leadership aims at success in persuading others, and even to the point of satisfying their interests. The objectives and targets are external to those led, as the relationship with them depends much more on authoritarianism than on rational incorporation. “[...] power only reorganizes what already exists, it does not produce new values.” (FOLLETT, 1924, p. 90). Unlike objectives and goals, the purpose is built with the involvement of those led. Purpose is dependent on a rational understanding rather than an emotional one. Thus, he tends to remain with those led in spaces that go beyond the company's limits. We can understand that the purpose has a dimension of transcendental, that is, it becomes part of everyone's desires for the realization of something that breaks at first sight, that selfish and centralizing perspective of objectives and goals.

## II. THE PASSAGE FROM OBJECTIVES AND GOALS TO PURPOSE, DISCONSTITUTING THE IDEA OF SUBORDINATION TO CO-PARTICIPATION

The purpose is the result of a collaborative construction, “coactive power” that presupposes the inclusion or the sum of the desires of the participants of a community, or of a company, here for example: teacher and student. If the purpose is a sum of desires and wishes, this presupposes that the realization of the purpose depends on everyone's participation. “[...] the will or purpose of a man or group is to be found in that activity which is a constant function, or a combination of such functions, of some aspect of its environment” (Follett, 1924, p. 79). Thus, all those involved are co-responsible for achieving the purpose that burdens everyone with responsibilities. Learning is the purpose of the teacher and the student, and everyone involved with education. The thesis that is present in Follett's argument is the conception of “jurisconcourt” that all are contemplated in the purpose, leaders, subordinates, shareholders and companies, teachers, and students. Purpose transcends the company itself and extends to the community. The purpose also presupposes community involvement. Now, the purpose behind the idea that relationships emancipate individuals and contributes to the constitution of autonomy. This becomes, in gestational leadership, an essential element for the expression of creativity. This is the social dimension of the company. “We should no longer think in terms of social institutions, but in terms of social activities”. (Follett, 1924, p. 207). The company does not only have an economic purpose. Purpose, in a way, arose from the power to unify, in the reach of multiplicities in what is both a means and an end, that which contains many (Follett, 1924).

This point supports Follett's argument (1924) that the company does not have an end in itself, as announced in the objectives and goals of the approach of traditional administrative theories. “The company as a social institution, not just a production vehicle, is a prelude to a variety of contemporary managerial issues” (Kanter, 1997, p. 13). Administrative leadership is founded on a centralizing perspective of the individual or a company. Their actions are based on the instrumental approach to domination. This idea was well developed by Max Weber, as he understands leadership as an exercise of power to impose a will through processes of rationalization. This traditional leadership model has the pernicious aim of linking our will and desires into productive activity. “Men study the art of persuasion, the method of gaining consent, but it is usually just a method of gaining power.” (Follett, 1924, p. 190). Instrumental reason is utilitarian reason with an end in itself. An instrumental reason that associated itself with power and renounced its critical and emancipatory force. This direct association of reason with power impedes the process of emancipation and liberation of students, leading them to understand the fragmented reality in bourgeois ideological discourses of domination.

This idea is understandable, as it assumes that those led do not have the ability to plan and organize. In the absence of these elements, they must be directed by someone who plans their actions to obtain productive and collective results. All this structuring is subdivided into hierarchical orders from the director to the group leaders, strictly respecting the order of command resulting from the objectives and goals. Those who lead a company bring within themselves the ability to command people and their actions linked to objectives and goals. Command demands servile obedience from those led. Now, at this moment, a discrepant action in the fragile process that puts the process and production in disharmony. Administrative leadership presupposes self-determination and self-realization as blind normative contents of self-preservation or domination over the other. Strongly influenced by a cognitive-instrumental heritage of bourgeois ideologies<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1. The decentralization of the figure of the leader as a hero for co-participation and co-responsibility of the led, “coactive power”

The idea that a leader develops is associated with the cultural archetype of each social group. Generally, the westernized idea of leadership gathers in itself the perception of transcendentalization. For example, in traditional management theories of leadership, leadership in the Weberian conception brings three fundamental characteristics of leadership, traditional, charismatic and legal. The leader is a representation of an idea of power. So, some thoughts.

#### a) Centralizing power based on instrumental reason to power based on cooperative reason

The idea of power in traditional management theories has always been associated with a hierarchical representation backed by conservatism. This representation developed a dualism in the factory environment between the leader and the followers, between the employer and the employees. This practice is associated with thinking about the space and time of production. This relationship imposes the subjectivity of the leader on the subordinates and the subjectivity of the employer on the employees. A subjectivity associated with power does not allow the emergence of creative thoughts, and men allows a creative experience (Follett, 1924). Paradoxically, the problems arising from this relationship are dependent on creative thoughts.

Planning and its execution directly reflect this dual hierarchical and conservative conception. Workers were believed to lack intelligence and complex reasoning skills for planning. But they were attributed to the driving force of the production process. This reality contrasted the attributions to the employee and the leaders. This relationship did not always work, even with planning and the driving force, production did not reach the pre-established goals. This labor relationship is dependent on a logic of the centralizing power relationship. For, according to Follett (1924, p. 12) “[...] power is the central question of industry, politics, international relations. But our task is not to learn where to place power, but how to develop it”.

It was believed that the centralization of power could resolve the problem between planning and production targets. It is associated with this, command, control and direction as intrinsic elements of the idea of leadership. This defines a leader. And these elements: command, control and direction are directly associated with the idea of traditional rationality. Traditional theories of managerial leadership are based on male characteristics. What actually appears is the strong influence of a heteronormative culture. “[...] power only reorganizes what already exists, it does not produce new values. No more just life for men will be the result of such a doctrine”.

These new models are shared between researchers and other communities, - there is no rule that the paradigms are restricted only to researchers and their community. We can observe in the history of sciences the demonstration that the paradigm tends to be adopted by different researchers and communities, when this model responds better to the problems faced than the framework of the old paradigm.

<sup>1</sup> HABERMAS, Jürgen. Post-metaphysical thinking. Translation by Flávio Beno Siebeneiche. Rio and Janeiro: Brazilian Time, 1990, p. 22.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The article brings the provocation from Follet, what would be the teacher-student relationship in the light of the idea of management. Now, whenever this theme is referred to, the analyzes always arise within the traditional theories of Scientific Management. Even if the authors try to innovate, they always present the same approaches. A relationship of hierarchical power, order of command and control over those led, producing a relationship of passivity on the part of those led. This was put to good use in productive relationships in factories and later transported to educational settings. Follet takes an approach to this relationship outside the mechanistic paradigmatic model that created the figure of the hero leader and the follower leader. Follet's idea of leadership is not within the same mechanistic paradigm as traditional scientific management theories. Follet's conception of leadership is within the integrative force paradigm, where the hero leader is replaced by the invisible leader. Coercion and argumentation are replaced by influence and co-responsibility in the realization of purposes.

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